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## The Pulse of Life

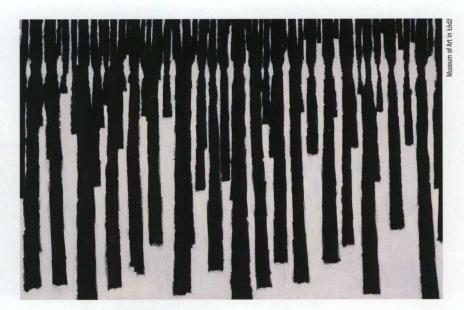
In both the natural world and human civilization, things quite often come full circle. This issue of Academia covers a diverse range of such recurring, back-to-the-beginning phenomena: on Earth and in space, in test tubes and on artist's canvasses.

Our article Heat from the Sun (p. 16), for instance, considers how harnessing some of the never-ending influx of solar energy might help resolve many global problems. Rivers, too, have their perennial aspect - on p. 38 we take a look at how they ceaselessly alter their riverbeds and we weigh the relative human impact.

Another factor now becoming crucial for our planet's future is the reuse and reprocessing of our wastes. But as we investigate on p. 4, not just plastics and metals but biowastes, too, are suitable for recycling. Our article by Prof. Lech Szajdak (p. 24), in turn, talks about useful chemical cycles in the soil and their contribution to agriculture. The female biological cycle and its effect on the immune system are covered in Regulated Resistance (p. 34), while the article Cycles of Life and Death (p. 12) addresses whether single-cell microbes actually age at all, and whether research here might help discover genes of longevity in humans.

On a more intellectual plane, we ponder the role of cycles in art on p. 32, looking at how the Spanish artist Francisco Goya's sequences can convey more than single compositions. The philosopher Prof. Barbara Skarga, in turn, is fascinated by how the human intellect creates theories and subsequently abandons them (p. 40). As all cycles are associated with waning and rebirth, with what passes and what stays behind, on p. 48 we commemorate the late Prof. Witold Karczewski, an outstanding erudite and advancer of science.

**ACADEMIA** staff



Leon Tarasewicz - a Polish artist of Belarusian origin, born in Waliły in the Podlasie region in 1957, and a graduate of the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts, where he runs a workshop. He believes that imagery should be valued in terms of painting alone, not for any added sense; he does not give his paintings titles. His work combines conceptualism and artistic installations, painting directly over the walls of galleries. He won the 2006 Grand Prize of the Foundation for Culture for consistently challenging both the traditional understanding of painting and all conventions in interpreting art. In 2008 he was ambassador of the European Year of Intercultural Dialog